

PLAN ENDORSEMENT REPORT FOR
DENNIS TOWNSHIP
(CAPE MAY COUNTY)

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SMART GROWTH
August 30, 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Background.....	2
Location and Regional Context.....	3
Demographics.....	3
Relevant Planning Activities	4
Inconsistency with State Plan – Goals & Policies	6
Inconsistency with State Plan – Center and Planning Area Criteria.....	12
Conclusion & Next Steps.....	20
Planning & Implementation Agreement.....	20
Appendix A: Letter from OSG to Dennis Township dated July 21, 2006	

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:85-7 et seq., Dennis Township has requested Initial Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission. This report contains findings and conclusions concerning consistency of the Township's plans and Planning & Implementation Agreement (PIA) with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). The review of the petition is based on information submitted by the petitioner and information otherwise available to the Office of Smart Growth (OSG).

Upon consideration of the Township's petition, OSG staff cannot recommend that the State Planning Commission (SPC) endorse the petition. There are a number of planning issues related to the proposed centers that need to be resolved. Some of these inconsistencies can be addressed in a revised PIA, but there are fundamental issues that must be resolved prior to Plan Endorsement.

In spite of the inconsistencies, OSG will encourage the Township to revise its petition for resubmission. The state agencies laud various aspects of the Township's planning, in particular its zoning regulations that protect significant, contiguous areas of open space and natural resources. OSG and other state agencies are committed to work with the Township to address the issues outlined in this report so that it can achieve Plan Endorsement in the near future.

BACKGROUND

Dennis Township came in with Upper and Middle Townships for a pre-petition meeting with OSG and other state agencies on November 23, 2004. The joint initiative between the three Townships was designed to maximize resources, including a \$150,000 Smart Future grant, and to coordinate plans across municipal boundaries.

In an effort to meet the deadline set by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to temporarily maintain then-existing coastal centers, Dennis Township submitted a petition on February 16, 2006. OSG deemed the petition incomplete on March 10, 2006. Even though the Township did not meet the completeness deadline, it decided to push ahead with the process, in part to keep aligned with the efforts of Upper and Middle Townships. Based on additional material received on April 17, 2006, OSG deemed the petition complete on May 17, 2006.

Based on written requests from concerned residents, OSG held a public hearing in Dennis Township on June 29, 2006 during the state agency review period. On July 21, 2006, OSG provided the Township a letter (Appendix A) outlining the concerns of state agencies. A significant part of this report is based on the consistency issues outlined in the letter, which are still pertinent at this point in time.

LOCATION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Dennis Township is located in Cape May County bounded by Upper Township and Woodbine Borough to the north, Middle Township to the south, Sea Isle City across the bay to the east, and Maurice River Township of Cumberland County to the west.

The Township has a land area of approximately 61 square miles. This area is split between the Coastal Zone (61%) and the Pinelands (39%).

The Township has access to the Garden State Parkway (GSP) at Exit 17. State highways include Routes 9, 47, 83 and 347, which are key arterials in the region, including access to the shore.

Dennis Township includes the communities of Belleplain, Clermont, Dennisville, Eldora, Ocean View, South Dennis and South Seaville. Belleplain and parts of other communities are Pinelands Villages. The other areas are proposed by the Township to be designated as centers for the State Plan.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Created in 1826, Dennis Township's early history was based around natural resources such as its cedar trees and the swamp. Lumbering, shipbuilding, shingle and shipping were major industries throughout the 19th century.

With the construction of the Garden State Parkway, the Township's population began to rise significantly, increasing dramatically between 1970 and 1990 from 2,635 people to 5,574. As of 2000, the population stood at 6,492.

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) anticipates continued but slower growth between 2000 and 2025, estimating 1,566 additional residents and 500 more jobs.

Dennis Township's Plan Endorsement petition notes these projections, but also considers recent building permit data. Extrapolation of this data would result in 3,027 additional residents by 2025, double the SJTPO estimate. However, this method would have to be tempered by constraints in land availability and infrastructure capacity to represent a true forecast (please see p. 9 for further discussion).

RELEVANT PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Purpose of Plan Endorsement

The purpose of the Plan Endorsement process is to achieve consistency among municipal, county, regional and State agency plans and with the State Plan, and to facilitate the implementation of these plans (N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.1(b)). Plans shall be endorsed only if they are internally consistent and demonstrate consistency with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.2(h)). Consistency means that the State Planning Commission has determined that a municipal plan is the same as or has the same effect as the provisions in the State Plan. In evaluating consistency, the Commission should consider all provisions of the State Plan with particular emphasis on:

- 1) Statewide goals and policies;
- 2) Planning Area policies and boundaries;
- 3) Critical Environmental Sites criteria and intent; and
- 4) Delineation criteria and intent for a Center designation. (N.J.A.C. 5:85-1.4)

The analysis that follows is predicated on the recognition that good planning is necessary to produce a desirable outcome.

Master Plan

The petition includes substantive reexaminations of the 1974 Master Plan from 1994 and 2002. The 1994 Plan set forth the Township's goals and objectives, which remained mostly unchanged in the 2002 version. However, the latter plan recommended a series of zoning changes to help implement the above objectives.

Both reexaminations emphasize the existing cultural heritage in the Township. For the purposes of preserving resources and encouraging appropriate economic development, the plans discuss the possibility of centers for cultural and ecological tourism. In support of this idea, the 1994 report includes an inventory of historic sites and encourages the creation of a historic preservation commission.

Cross-Acceptance

The Township has participated in the Cross-Acceptance process, working in coordination with Cape May County. In the Cape May County Cross-Acceptance Report, the Township did not propose any Planning Area changes. However, in response to the Preliminary Plan Policy Map, the Plan Endorsement petition calls for the following changes:

- Retention of PA3 within the proposed Clermont Center; and
- Change from PA4 to PA3 in the western section of the proposed Ocean View Center.

As these Planning Area issues are related to center boundary discussions, they will be resolved in that context.

With regard to policy issues, the Cape May County Cross-Acceptance Report comprises the Township's concerns regarding state planning processes and open space measures. At a more local level, the report reiterates the Township's opposition to the extension of Route 55, discussed in the recent master plan reexaminations.

Smart Future Grants

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, OSG awarded Dennis, Upper and Middle Townships a joint grant totaling \$150,000 to assist them in planning activities related to Plan Endorsement. The Townships' petition reports, discussing and linking various plans, have been the primary products of the grant so far. OSG has worked with the Townships to revise the grant scope based on their current needs. A proposed scope revision from June 2006 outlines the need for center concepts and environs protection strategies.

OSG has also worked with Cape May County in revising an outdated FY03 grant scope. The County's work should complement the efforts of the Townships, including consideration of issues such as water supply and overall development capacity. A countywide TDR program will be one of the possible solutions explored through the grant.

Water Supply

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the U.S. Geological Survey are conducting an intensive study of the Cohansey Aquifer water resources in southern Cape May County. This study will determine the present and future water supply needs while minimizing adverse ground water or ecological impacts on the area. The extent to

which additional groundwater can be pumped is a primary focus of the study.

Now entering its final phase, the study has developed preliminary water supply scenarios with respect to projected water demand, hydrology, ecology, regulatory policy; assessed preliminary water-supply scenarios for impacts on saltwater intrusion, stream-flow depletion, and ecosystem impacts; and determined ecological sensitivities to hydrologic changes implicit with the best scenario(s). A cost effectiveness/feasibility analysis will determine the best scenario. Consideration of water supply capacity should carry on into the PIA.

INCONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLAN GOALS & POLICIES

The State Plan is made up of 8 Goals and Strategies and 19 Statewide Policies that are complemented by a State Plan Policy Map. This section discusses consistency with regard to goals relevant to the Township's Petition, along with related policies and sub-policies.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p>Goal 2: Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems</p> <p>STRATEGY: Conserve the state's natural resources and systems as capital assets of the public by promoting ecologically sound development and redevelopment in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas, accommodating environmentally designed development and redevelopment in Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, and by restoring the integrity of natural systems in areas where they have been degraded or damaged. Plan, design, invest in and manage the development and redevelopment of Centers and the use of land, water, soil, plant and animal resources to maintain biodiversity and the viability of ecological systems. Maximize the ability of natural systems to control runoff and flooding, and to improve air and water quality and supply.</p>	<p>Policy on Water Resources - Protect and enhance water resources through coordinated planning efforts aimed at reducing sources of pollution and other adverse effects of development, encouraging designs in hazard-free areas that will protect the natural function of stream and wetland systems, and optimizing sustainable resource use.</p> <p>Policy on Coastal Resources - Acknowledge the statutory treatment of the coastal area under federal and state legislation, coordinate efforts to establish a comprehensive coastal management program with local planning efforts, undertake a regional capacity analysis, protect vital ecological areas and promote recreational opportunities.</p>	

Analysis

All of the Township's proposed centers include significant amounts of undeveloped land where there are environmental concerns. The proposed centers for South Seaville, Ocean View and Clermont lie completely within C1 watersheds. Western portions of Dennisville also are within a C1 watershed. Most of the centers also contain important wetlands and habitat for State and Federally listed Endangered or Threatened Species. Additionally,

Dennisville, South Dennis, South Seaville, Clermont contain Natural Heritage Priority sites.

The state agencies have not yet come to an agreement with the Township on the boundaries of the proposed centers. The Township needs to provide more information regarding its vision and objectives for these centers in terms of land use, transportation and infrastructure capacity, and affordable housing (see p. 9 on housing). In light of the State Plan's Goal 2 and related policies, this detailed

justification is necessary for state agencies to consider the inclusion of environmentally sensitive areas in the centers. Prior to OSG recommendation for endorsement, an updated land use element is required addressing the issues described throughout this report.

Natural Resource Inventory

A detailed Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) will be a key first step to defining the centers in an appropriate fashion. The Township's current NRI includes an abbreviated evaluation of natural resources in the Existing Conditions Inventory, Section 1.3, and refers to the 1994 Master Plan. This is not a sufficient tool to serve as a guide for planning boards and environmental commissions. The NRI should provide the foundation for the development of resource protection ordinances and resource-based land use planning and be adopted by the Township planning board as part of the master plan.

Environmental Protection Ordinance

As part of the discussion of center boundaries, the state agencies and the Township agreed to pursue the idea of an environmental protection ordinance to address small and/or irregularly shaped environmentally sensitive sites within the centers. This ordinance is to help maintain the contiguity and form of centers while protecting the natural resources within the centers. The Township has submitted a draft ordinance. While this ordinance provides for the inspection of environmentally sensitive sites, it does not adequately address how such resources would be protected.

Water Supply

As discussed above, Dennis Township will need to ensure that development is coordinated with water availability. A key question will be how much the Township is willing to pay for its water in the long term.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p>Goal 5: Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost</p> <p>STRATEGY: Provide infrastructure and related services more efficiently by supporting investments based on comprehensive planning and by providing financial incentives for jurisdictions that cooperate in supplying public infrastructure and shared services. Encourage the use of infrastructure needs assessments and life-cycle costing. Reduce demands for infrastructure investment by using public and private markets to manage peak demands, applying alternative management and financing approaches, using resource conserving technologies and information systems to provide and manage public facilities and services, and purchasing land and easements to prevent development, protect flood plains and sustain agriculture where appropriate.</p>	<p>Policy on Transportation - Improve transportation systems by coordinating transportation and land-use planning; integrating transportation systems; developing and enhancing alternative modes of transportation; improving management structures and techniques; and utilizing transportation as an economic development tool.</p>	<p>Indicator 14. The percent of all trips to work made by carpool, public transportation, bicycle, walking or working at home - The percent of trips to work made by carpool, public transportation, bicycle, walking or working at home increases by 2005 and 2020.</p> <p>Indicator 16. Number of pedestrian fatalities in vehicular accidents on state roads - Reduce the number of pedestrian fatalities in vehicular accidents on state roads by 2005 and 2020.</p>

Analysis

Dennis Township's petition lacks sufficient coordination between land use and transportation, specifically with regard to its interest in enhanced rail and bus transit services. The Township has expressed a desire to expand the Cape May Seashore Line seasonal excursion rail service north from its current terminus in Cape May Court House to Tuckahoe and, eventually, further north to possibly connect to the Atlantic City Rail Line (pp. 28-30). NJ TRANSIT is working with the communities along the line as well as the private rail service operator to determine feasibility, phasing and funding opportunities and constraints. The Township has also called for improved bus facilities in the PIA.

To support NJ TRANSIT's efforts, the Township should plan for land uses and pedestrian linkages that will enhance the viability of transit service, whether it is from a recreational/tourist or commuter perspective. This connection with land use and design is crucial in ensuring that transit facilities and services are provided at a reasonable cost, as outlined by State Plan Goal 5.

Furthermore, considerations for transit and development will have to be balanced with other infrastructure, particularly water and sewer service. As transit requires denser development to make the service viable and as limits in water and sewer put downward pressure on potential densities, the petition needs to determine the appropriate level of development.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p>Goal 6: Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost</p> <p>STRATEGY: Provide adequate housing at a reasonable cost through public/private partnerships that create and maintain a broad choice of attractive, affordable, ecologically designed housing, particularly for those most in need. Create and maintain housing in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and in Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, at densities which support transit and reduce commuting time and costs, and at locations easily accessible, preferably on foot, to employment, retail, services, cultural, civic and recreational opportunities. Support regional and community-based housing initiatives and remove unnecessary regulatory and financial barriers to the delivery of housing at appropriate locations.</p>	<p>Policy on Housing - Preserve and expand the supply of safe, decent and reasonably priced housing by balancing land uses, housing types and housing costs and by improving access between jobs and housing. Promote low- and moderate-income and affordable housing through code enforcement, housing subsidies, community-wide housing approaches and coordinated efforts with the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing.</p> <p>Policy on Design - Mix uses and activities as closely and as thoroughly as possible; develop, adopt and implement design guidelines; create spatially defined, visually appealing and functionally efficient places in ways that establish an identity; design circulation systems to promote connectivity; maintain an appropriate scale in the built environment; and redesign areas of sprawl.</p>	<p>Indicator 20. Percent of New Jersey households paying more than 30% of their pre-tax household income towards housing - The percentage of households statewide paying 30% or more of their income for standard housing is reduced by 2005 and is further reduced by 2020.</p> <p>Indicator 24. Annual production of affordable housing units - Annual production of 4,000 affordable housing units by 2005 and 5,000 by 2020.</p>

Analysis

The petition needs to reconcile the relatively limited amount of developable residential land with the Township's growth projections and affordable housing obligations. The petition (p.12) states that there are 86.2 acres of residentially zoned land available for development within the proposed centers, yielding 25 lots based on the current zoning. In comparison, the Township has a Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) prior round (1987-1999) obligation of 229 new construction units and a rehabilitation share of five. The petition must explain how the Township will accommodate its affordable housing obligations.

Projections will also have to be coordinated with the above concerns. SJTPO projects a population increase of 1,251 of 6,807 in year 2005 to 8,058 in 2025. For the COAH third round period, SJTPO projects growth of 216 households and 200 jobs by 2015. This translates into an obligation of 32 to 35 units, depending on whether the Township has affordable housing plans on the horizon; the actual growth share obligation is based on the growth that occurs in the Township.

Furthermore, the petition contains preliminary analysis projecting even more growth. Based on the average of 41.6 building permits per year during the 1990s, the petition projects an increase of 3,027 residents between 2000 and

2025 (Existing Conditions Inventory, p.8). However, the petition does note potential limitations in the availability of land and infrastructure capacity.

In order for OSG to recommend this petition for endorsement, the Township must reconcile the above issues

of projected growth and affordable housing in conjunction with center boundaries. A draft Housing Element and Fair Share Plan will be necessary to demonstrate resolution of these issues.

Goal	Policies	Indicators
<p>Goal 8: Ensure Sound, Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide</p> <p>STRATEGY: Use the State Plan and the Plan Endorsement process as a guide to achieve comprehensive, coordinated, long-term planning based on capacity analysis and citizen participation; and to integrate planning with investment, program and regulatory land-use decisions at all levels of government and the private sector, in an efficient, effective and equitable manner. Ensure that all development, redevelopment, revitalization or conservation efforts support State Planning Goals and are consistent with the Statewide Policies and State Plan Policy Map of the State Plan.</p>	<p>Policy on Comprehensive Planning - Promote planning for the public's benefit, and with strong public participation, by enhancing planning capacity at all levels of government, using capacity-based planning and Plan Endorsement to guide the location and pattern of growth and promoting cooperation and coordination among counties, municipalities, state, interstate and federal agencies.</p> <p>Policy on Planning Regions Established by Statute - The State Plan acknowledges the special statutory treatment accorded the New Jersey Pinelands under the Pinelands Protection Act, and the Hackensack Meadowlands under the Hackensack Meadowlands Reclamation and Development Act. The State Planning Commission is explicitly directed to "rely on the adopted plans and regulations of these entities in developing the State Plan." In the State Plan, these areas are considered Planning Regions Established by Statute.</p> <p>Policy on Public Investment Priorities - It is the intent of the State Plan that the full amount of growth projected for the state should be accommodated. Plan Strategies recommend guiding this growth to Centers and other areas identified within Endorsed Plans where infrastructure exists or is planned and where it can be provided efficiently, either with private or public dollars. (Designated Centers are included in the category of communities with Endorsed Plans.) Public investment priorities guide the investment of public dollars to support and carry out these Plan Strategies.</p>	<p>Key Indicator 6. The degree to which local plans and state agency plans are consistent with the State Plan</p> <p>Indicator 25. Municipalities participating in comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional regional planning processes consistent with the State Plan</p>

Analysis

Due to the Township's location in the coastal zone, it is important that the proper emergency planning has been done to protect residents from flooding and other large-scale disasters. The Township has yet to provide formal

documentation that it has an Emergency Operating Plan approved by the New Jersey State Police.

INCONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLAN - CENTER AND PLANNING AREA CRITERIA

Proposed Centers

Dennis Township has requested designation of six centers as defined in the State Plan. The five proposed Villages are Clermont, Dennisville, Ocean View, South Dennis and South Seaville. Eldora is a proposed Hamlet. The proposed centers for Dennisville and Eldora are located on the boundary between CAFRA and Pinelands. As these two centers lie across from Villages designated by the Pinelands Commission, they should also be assessed with the goal of consistency between the State Plan and Pinelands.

According to the Coastal Zone Management Rules, Villages and Hamlets allow for impervious surface coverage limits of 60% and 50% respectively.

Aside from the 39% of the Township is located in the Pinelands, the Township comprises Fringe, Rural, Rural/Environmentally Sensitive and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas (PA's 3, 4, 4B and 5). As these Planning Areas allow for just 3-5% impervious surface coverage, centers are key to accommodating growth and development. However, as noted earlier, the petition needs to provide more specific justification for the proposed centers' inclusion of lands with natural resources.

Center Criteria

For the proposed Village centers, the Township's population and housing densities fall significantly short of the State Plan criteria. Even though these criteria are to be applied flexibly according to the regional context, the petition does not provide justification as to why the Villages should be designated in spite of the inconsistencies. The justification should also explain the inclusion of the R3 district in various centers, which permits 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres, a relatively low figure compared to the criteria.

The petition notes in general terms various ideas for development, including mixed uses, which indicate future zoning amendments. Similar to the above discussion of the proposed centers, the state agencies would like to know more about the development envisioned by the Township. The criteria evaluation should estimate both present and future data for population, housing, employment and other categories. In particular, the petition needs to do more to establish a nexus between the proposed centers and how they will accommodate affordable housing in a well-designed context.

Clermont Village

Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Village	Proposed Village Baseline	Proposed Village 2025
<i>Land Use</i>			
Function	Mixed-residential community Integrated into regional network of communities with transportation links. Planned to preserve farmland or environmentally sensitive areas. Identified in master plans and as part of municipal planning effort.	Retail, office and service-related development along Route 9.	
Land area	< 1 sq mi	0.74 sq mi	
Housing	> 3 du / ac	Zoning at 1 du / 3 ac	
<i>Population</i>			
Number of people	< 4,500	367	
Density	> 5,000 per sq mi	512	
<i>Infrastructure</i>			
Capacity (general)	Sufficient existing or planned infrastructure	Private wells and on-site septic.	Petition discusses possibility of community package treatment plants.
Transportation	Reasonable proximity to arterial.	Routes 9 and 83, County Road 608.	Improvements underway on Route 9-83 intersection.

Dennisville Village

Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Village	Proposed Village Baseline	Proposed Village 2025
<i>Land Use</i>			
Function	Mixed-residential community Integrated into regional network of communities with transportation links. Planned to preserve farmland or environmentally sensitive areas. Identified in master plans and as part of municipal planning effort.	Residential development. Scattered service and retail along Route 47 servicing local residents. Township municipal building and DPW facilities on County Road 610.	
Land area	< 1 sq mi	0.30 sq mi (0.91 incl. Pinelands center)	
Housing	> 3 du / ac	Zoning at 1 du / 3 ac; 1 du / 35,000 sq ft	
<i>Population</i>			
Number of people	< 4,500	186 (420 incl. Pinelands center)	
Density	> 5,000 per sq mi	634 (868 incl. Pinelands center)	
<i>Infrastructure</i>			
Capacity (general)	Sufficient existing or planned infrastructure	Private wells and on-site septic.	
Transportation	Reasonable proximity to arterial.	County Road 610 and Route 47.	Proposes re-establishment of rail station as part of Cape May Seashore Line extension.

South Dennis Village

Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Village	Proposed Village Baseline	Proposed Village 2025
<i>Land Use</i>			
Function	Mixed-residential community Integrated into regional network of communities with transportation links. Planned to preserve farmland or environmentally sensitive areas. Identified in master plans and as part of municipal planning effort.	Predominantly residential with services along Routes 47 and 83.	
Land area	< 1 sq mi	1.4 sq mi	
Housing	> 3 du / ac	Zoning at 1 du / 3 ac; 1 du / 35,000 sq ft	
<i>Population</i>			
Number of people	< 4,500	1,509	
Density	> 5,000 per sq mi	1,109	
<i>Infrastructure</i>			
Capacity (general)	Sufficient existing or planned infrastructure	Private wells and on-site septic.	
Transportation	Reasonable proximity to arterial.	Routes 47 and 83.	

South Seaville Village

Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Village	Proposed Village Baseline	Proposed Village 2025
<i>Land Use</i>			
Function	Mixed-residential community	Predominantly residential development and large areas of farmland.	
	Integrated into regional network of communities with transportation links.		
	Planned to preserve farmland or environmentally sensitive areas.		
	Identified in master plans and as part of municipal planning effort.		
Land area	< 1 sq mi	0.47 sq mi	
Housing	> 3 du / ac	Zoning at 1 du / 3 ac; 1 du / 35,000 sq ft	
<i>Population</i>			
Number of people	< 4,500	518	
Density	> 5,000 per sq mi	1,147	
<i>Infrastructure</i>			
Capacity (general)	Sufficient existing or planned infrastructure	Private wells and on-site septic.	
Transportation	Reasonable proximity to arterial.	County Roads 608 and 628.	

Ocean View Village

Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Village	Proposed Village Baseline	Proposed Village 2025
<i>Land Use</i>			
Function	<p>Mixed-residential community integrated into regional network of communities with transportation links.</p> <p>Planned to preserve farmland or environmentally sensitive areas.</p> <p>Identified in master plans and as part of municipal planning effort.</p>	Retail, office and service-related development along Route 9. Campgrounds in southern portion. Shore Gate Golf Course.	
Land area	< 1 sq mi	0.61 sq mi	
Housing	> 3 du / ac	Zoning at 1 du / ac.	
<i>Population</i>			
Number of people	< 4,500	350	
Density	> 5,000 per sq mi	597	
<i>Infrastructure</i>			
Capacity (general)	Sufficient existing or planned infrastructure	Private wells and on-site septic.	Petition discusses possibility of community package treatment plants.
Transportation	Reasonable proximity to arterial.	Garden State Parkway (Exit 17), Route 9, County Road 657.	

Eldora Hamlet

Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Hamlet	Proposed Hamlet Baseline	Proposed Hamlet 2025
<i>Land Use</i>			
Function	Small-scale compact residential settlement with community functions	Residential development and farmland.	
Land area	10-50 acres (<100 if wastewater system is not feasible)	52.5 acres (330 acres incl. Pinelands center)	
Housing	> 2 du / ac	Zoning at 1 du / 5 ac	
Housing Units	<100		
<i>Population</i>			
Number of people	25-250	68 (155 incl. Pinelands center)	
Density		829 (592 incl. Pinelands center)	
<i>Infrastructure</i>			
Capacity (general)		Private wells and on-site septic.	
Transportation		Route 47.	

Importance of a Design Framework

The regulatory standards for impervious surface coverage in the CAFRA regulations provide significant motivation for Dennis Township's participation in Plan Endorsement. Without the higher coverage allowed in Centers, the Township's goals for affordable housing and economic growth would be difficult to achieve. However, it should be noted that an impervious surface standard alone does not produce the types of quality human and natural environments envisioned in the State Plan. The primary philosophy of the State Plan is that growth should be focused in centers, which are designed as neighborhoods for people. To date, the Township's petition has not provided information, even at a general level, regarding community design. The following excerpt from the State Plan addresses the importance of a design framework:

Centers are complex, richly textured living communities, where a physical framework of buildings, infrastructure and open spaces actively supports the economy and civil society. Traditional compact communities have evolved (and continue to evolve) over long periods of time, demonstrating a frequently overlooked capacity for adapting to changing – and sometimes adverse – circumstances. A community's ability to respond positively to changing conditions is in part attributable to the basic soundness of its physical framework, which – unlike the uni-dimensional, single purpose developments typical of suburban sprawl – is designed to support a wide diversity of uses and activities for a wide diversity of users. Such a flexible physical framework accommodates change with much greater ease than the automobile dependent, single-use and single-purpose products of sprawl development.

The challenge in planning for new Centers is to create the physical frameworks, which foster these qualities of flexibility and diversity in an increasingly specialized development environment geared to delivering single-purpose products. The task of managing existing compact communities – of coping with existing market realities and changing consumer demand – without damaging the physical

framework and slowly losing these unique qualities, poses the same challenges.

Planning and designing new Centers is not an easy task. Nevertheless, the potential rewards are considerable, while the downside of not developing in Centers is also significant. Yet new Centers are unlikely to happen if municipalities take no proactive steps in that direction. This means involving the private sector (developers, land owners, residents) in visioning, in adopting detailed regulating plans that establish basic street alignments, reserve choice locations for major public uses and establish neighborhood character, and in implementing these plans consistently. Proactive municipal planning with the active participation of interested parties offers a much higher level of predictability to developers and other stakeholders than the current norm.



CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The Township will soon be preparing a new housing plan and fair share element. This document will help address many of the issues outlined in this report, by:

- Providing a clearer idea of future growth;
- Demonstrating the ability of accommodate affordable housing within centers;
- Considering necessary adjustments in land use and zoning; and
- Helping to justify proposed center boundaries.

The Township's land use element will need to be amended accordingly, incorporating details such as center concepts and potential affordable housing sites.

OSG and other state agencies would like to continue work with Dennis Township to resolve inconsistencies. If the Township decides to prepare a revised petition, the Plan Endorsement negotiation process will likely produce substantive changes from the current version. Therefore, it will be necessary for the Township to hold an additional public meeting regarding the petition.

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT

Due to inconsistencies in the submitted planning documents, progress has not been made in negotiating the PIA. However, state agencies have reviewed the PIA submitted by the Township and are ready to discuss proposed changes. PIA items proposed by state agencies, including requirements for DEP CAFRA consistency, can be found in Appendix A.

The agencies are also willing to entertain new PIA item proposals from the Township, especially where they address issues discussed in this report such as transportation, water supply or historic preservation.